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Committee on Homeland Security Adopts Port Security Legislation

“SAFE Port” Act will now be sent to the full House for consideration

Washington, DC (Wednesday, April 26, 2006) Today, House Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Peter T. King (R-NY) led a Full Committee markup of the “Security and Accountability For Every (SAFE) Port” Act, comprehensive port security legislation that will enhance security at United States ports, track and protect containers en route to the United States, and prevent threats from reaching U.S. soil. The bill passed unanimously and will now be sent to the full House for consideration.

“Passing a comprehensive, bipartisan port security bill is one of the most important things we’ll do this year,” King said. “The SAFE Port Act takes the necessary steps to secure our ports and prevent threats from ever reaching U.S. soil, by implementing an international, multi-layered approach to cargo screening and port security. I’d like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support of this important piece of legislation.”

The bill was introduced by Rep. Dan Lungren (R-CA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity, and Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA).

“The ‘SAFE Port’ Act is a comprehensive proposal to strengthen the maritime transportation system through a layered security strategy that builds on existing initiatives to secure the supply chain from the point of origin to delivery in the United States,” Lungren said. “Though the vulnerability of our seaports has become an important issue in recent months, the reality is that this legislation is long overdue. I am pleased Chairman King and this Committee have acted with the appropriate sense of urgency to address weaknesses in our port security.”

The “SAFE Port” Act provides a total of \$7.4 billion in federal funding to enhance port security, fully authorizing and codifying the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO), and requires the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to deploy nuclear and radiological detection systems at all domestic seaports. The bill also improves port security communication and information sharing at the federal, state, and local levels.

Furthermore, the legislation takes a global approach to shipping and cargo security by taking steps to enhance two important international screening programs: the Container Security Initiative (CSI), and the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) program. Finally, the bill will help track and protect shipments en route to the U.S., through improvements to high-risk cargo targeting and tracking systems.

“We must do everything in our power to prevent another terrorist attack on U.S. soil,” King said. “That means continuing to strengthen our domestic and international security efforts through measures like the SAFE Port Act. As long as our ports remain vulnerable, so do the American people.”

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